

# Dog on the Couch Terms, Conditions & Rules

**In order to adhere to dog owners' needs and expectations as well as addressing personal concerns the following regulations will apply any time a person with or without a dog is on the training grounds. Everybody is required to abide by these rules and etiquette at all times while on the premises.**

- ↪ Dog owners (and any accompanying individuals) and their dog/s use the facilities entirely at their own risk and that of their dog/s. The owner/s of the dog/s will be liable for any damage or injury caused by his/her dog/s on the premises. Dog on the Couch and personnel (human and canine) shall not be held accountable for any loss, injury, damage or expenses under any circumstances whatsoever, arising from/and in respect of participation in any event, class, course and the Play Group.
- ↪ The addition of any new/strange dog/s must first be cleared with Dog on the Couch prior to bringing the dog/s to any event, class, course and the Play Group.
- ↪ All dogs should wear a secure collar or harness. Owners must have a strong leash at hand for each dog.
- ↪ Puppies under four months old will be allowed under strict supervision and by prior arrangement with Dog on the Couch.
- ↪ Female dogs, in any stage of oestrus, are not allowed on the premises.
- ↪ If a dog shows any sign of illness (not eating, hot/fever, lethargic, itchy, weepy eyes, vomiting or limping) please take it to the Vet ASAP. Only bring the dog to the premises if the Vet gives the OK.
- ↪ Toddlers or small children 6 years and younger will only be allowed if arranged prior with Dog on the Couch. This is a school/playground for dogs, not children.
- ↪ All children must be under close supervision of an adult at all times. Please see additional information on the following page in this regard.
- ↪ All off-leash dogs must be under voice control of their owners. If an owner can not control his/her dog off leash, the dog should be kept on leash at all times. Dogs must not be left unattended or out of sight. Owners should remain with their dog/s at all times as they move around the premises.
- ↪ **Owners must clean up after their dog/s.** Seal the waste in a bag before disposing of it in the rubbish bin. Please help by picking up orphan poops to keep the area clean.
- ↪ Dogs must be current on all vaccinations. Please supply relevant documentation as proof with the first visit/at enrolment. Kindly provide updated records when the current one expires.
- ↪ Unless otherwise arranged with Dog on the Couch, each dog should have its own handler for any of

the training classes and/or courses. A handler is limited to a maximum of two dogs if the handler can control both dogs comfortably.

- ↪ Dogs exhibiting aggravating, vicious, aggressive or dangerous behaviour are not permitted at any time. Handlers must leash their dog/s at the first sign of aggression or unruliness. Dogs with tendencies to bully will not be allowed off leash.
- ↪ **Any harsh treatment of a dog is strictly prohibited. Persons acting violently towards their dogs or any other person on the premises will be asked to leave immediately.**
- ↪ Long lasting food treats for dogs are not permitted.
- ↪ Frisbees, balls and retrieval toys are allowed and encouraged. Owners and dogs must be prepared to share with other dogs though.
- ↪ Dogs must be kept on leash at all times while outside the fenced area (soccer field). Even if a dog is under perfect voice control, many people are afraid of dogs and an off-leash dog in a public area violates the city's bylaws.
- ↪ The access gate must be properly secured upon entering/leaving the premises.
- ↪ Right of Admission Reserved

## **Stuff to consider when attending any event, class, course or The Play Group**

When you bring your dog to the premises for the first time it could be a very overwhelming experience for your dog and can result in your dog being anxious and/or fearful. Because your dog reacts on your state of mind you should remain calm. Take a few deep breaths and take your dog for a stroll around the perimeter of the field until your dog is more relaxed. If you are concerned how your dog will interact with the other dogs rather ask for assistance from *Dog on the Couch*.

For a young, unsocialised or fearful dog any intimidating behaviour from another dog could be traumatic and can lead to the development of behavioural problems. One of our primary goals is to teach our dogs to have good manners. Always be considerate of other owners and their dogs. Events, classes, courses and the Play Group should be enjoyable, healthy and educational experiences for all handlers and dogs.

A tight leash encourages tension and anxiety that can lead to a dog fight. Keep the leash slack at all times when dogs are introduced to one another.

Be alert and stay on your feet. An excited dog could easily run you off your feet (accidentally of course).

Keep your dog focussed on you and engage in constructive, interactive and fun activities. Even though your dog is running around having fun you can still use the situation to fine tune obedience (such

# Dog on the Couch Terms, Conditions & Rules

as the recall) in a way that is enjoyable for you and your dog.

Don't stand around in one area for too long. This can cause arguments amongst the dogs. Owners are encouraged to keep moving.

**Very important.** Please discourage your dog/s from standing at or near the gate when people are trying to enter or leave.

**Very important.** The area around the water bowls should not be crowded. Please call your dog away as soon as he/she has finished drinking.

## Aggressive Dogs

If your dog happily co-exist with people in your household, visitors and other dogs on your property it doesn't mean your dog is socialised and will be friendly towards strange people and dogs. If you are concerned about how your dog will react towards strange people and dogs it is advisable to arrange for an evaluation with us prior to bringing your dog to the premises. If your dog displays aggressive behaviour, Dog on the Couch can assist with private training lessons and behavioural modification exercises to address the behaviour.

Intact males, overly assertive dogs, under socialized and fearful dogs can be dangerous in situations that they perceive as confrontational and/or threatening. Such a dog can respond aggressively. NEVER approach a strange dog or encourage/force your dog to do so, in any circumstances. Wait for the dog to come to you. If it doesn't, move away. Remember to keep that leash relaxed.

A dog can display aggressive behaviour for

various reasons. Apart from establishing rank and sorting out territorial issues a dog can also lash out because it is fearful (often the case with an unsocialised dog), in pain, being disabled (i.e. deaf, blind, arthritic, etc) or old. A dog can also display chase and predatory instincts, play aggression or it can discipline an unruly youngster.

We love to see our dogs run freely and enjoy interaction and play with other dogs. However think like dogs do. Do not take offence if another dog "insults" your dog or visa versa. We happily accept that not all people get along. Yet we expect our dogs to get along with every dog and person they come into contact with. Dogs do sometimes just take a dislike in another dog or person and will not be hypocritical about it.

Prevention is better than cure. If you are approached by a dog while your dog is on leash and you are concerned about the upcoming interaction turn around without delay, remain calm, call your dog to you in a calm and happy voice and walk away.

## Children and dogs

Playful, unsupervised children and playful, unleashed dogs mixed together could result in injury.

Children tend to scream and run when excited, which can trigger a dog's prey drive or hereditary instinct to chase.

Be sure to teach your child how to behave appropriately around dogs. Children should never run around, scream, pick up and wave sticks, or approach dogs that they do not know. Not all dogs are used to children and can find their behaviour scary.

Please ask *Dog on the Couch* for a free copy of a coloring book teaching children how to be safe around dogs.

